

February 5, 2004

Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: **WT 02-55** Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band

Dear Madame Secretary,

I was recently sworn in as the new Chief of Police for Wakefield, Massachusetts and one of my first initiatives is to lend Wakefield PD's support to the public safety effort of eliminating the problem of 800 MHz interference gradually impeding first responders throughout the state and the country as a whole. Interference does not discriminate – it affects large agencies like the Massachusetts State Police and it affects small agencies like the Worchester Fire Department. And if we don't do something soon, it will affect even more large, small, and in-between agencies.

Research has shown that one of the main causes of interference to public safety radios is the shared space in the 800 MHz band with commercial wireless operators such as cell phones. Cell phones are not going away; and cell phone use is becoming more widespread every day. Interference will remain a danger if we continue to ignore this blistering situation.

My public safety colleagues have been calling for the implementation of the Consensus Plan. And, after doing some research, I wholeheartedly agree with their cause. The Consensus Plan focuses directly on the problem and solves it. Other proposals focus on the mitigation of interference's effects – such an approach is reactive at best, dangerous at worst. Equally importantly, the Consensus Plan is completely privately funded and will not impose any type of financial burden upon public safety agencies. Being a Police Chief, I know of the over-burdened budgets of public safety agencies and appreciate that the Plan includes this important detail.

This is an issue that the Commission cannot afford to “sweep under the rug” any longer. Police officers and other first responders have identified the problem and the solution, it is now up to you to provide them with the tools we are seeking. It should not be too much to ask to have clear and reliable mobile communications. Please adopt the Consensus Plan.

Yours Truly,

Rick Smith
Chief of Police

CC: Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator John Kerry
Representative Edward J. Markey